

Subject: Progress Report on the Work of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups
Status: For Publication

Report to: Council

Date: 27 March 2007

Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Key Decision: No

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide an update on the work of Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups during 2006/07.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2.1 The matters in the report link to the following Corporate Priorities:

- Keeping our Borough Clean and Green through the review of the Litter Bins Task and Finish Group, to help create neighbourhoods people can be proud of.
- Delivery of quality services to our customers by ensuring that the services we deliver are continually monitored to improve standards and quality.
- Equipping Councillors to fulfill their leadership role in the community through supporting Councillors in championing the views of the local community.
- Strong financial management and the delivery of value for money services by ensuring that money is spent effectively on addressing the things local people feel are important.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

In June 2006 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee identified areas of work for their 2006/07 Work Programme. Below is a brief summary of their work and the work of the Local Strategic Partnership in relation to

Young People/Older People - These pieces of work had been brought forward from the 2005/06 work programme. Members received an update on the LSP's activities to support older people and the current work ongoing which supports young people.

Members agreed that some progress was being made by the LSP on delivering against the needs of older people, however, the LSP should consider the need to explicitly identify the activities which the theme groups are delivering against which will assist older people, details of which should be contained in the annual report to the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

In relation to the LSP for Younger People, the LSP Assembly on 19 March 2007 would focus on young people.

It was agreed that the Younger People's Champion would provide an annual update on their activities to the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Car Parking - A final report was presented to the Cabinet in November 2006, when it was agreed that a Working Group continues to meet and establish a Terms of Reference to include:

- Investigation of options in terms of residents parking schemes
- Monitor disc parking scheme and consider whether length of stay is appropriate to each individual car park
- Investigate alternative revenue sources
- Identification of new car parks

The Group had their first meeting in February 2007 and agreed to continue to meet within the new municipal year.

Highways – A final report was presented to Lancashire Locals on 5 March 2007 and had been sent to Lancashire County Council for comments.

Litter Bins – A final report was presented and agreed by Cabinet in February 2007. The Scrutiny Support Officer together with the Chair of the Litter Bins Task and Finish Group would discuss the recommendations within the report with the Head of Street Scene and Liveability.

Monitoring of Polling Stations - The Task and Finish Group had two meetings with the Elections Officer to discuss concerns raised by elected Members during the last election. Although Members were mindful that a national review was due to take place during the year, in consultation with the Elections Officer a number of alternative solutions were found in relation to buildings used for this year's elections.

Members also asked that additional signage be purchased highlighting the location of polling stations. A letter was sent to the Returning Officer requesting additional funding for signage and this was accepted.

Members would be involved in the national review of Polling Stations.

Review of Ombudsman Complaints - The Task and Finish Group met with Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive, Bill Lawley, Interim Legal and Democratic Services Manager and Jenni Cook, Committee Officer.

Members were made aware of the improvements that had been made to the administration of Ombudsman Complaints. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that Ombudsman complaint figures for Rossendale were relatively low when compared to other authorities and indicated that the situation had improved greatly over the past few months.

Regular 6 monthly updates would be presented to the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Community Cohesion – The Task and Finish Group considered a range of information about community cohesion and about the work taking place in Rossendale. National documents included information from the Home Office, DCLG (the Eight Guiding Principles) and Commission for Racial Equality. Local information was provided about the work of the LSP, the results of the Living in East Lancashire Survey, Rossendale's Statement of Intent and a draft response by East Lancashire Together to a consultation by the Commission for Integration and Cohesion.

Members discussed the scope of community cohesion including age, ethnicity, and geographical considerations. Accessible meeting places for diverse groups, street scene issues and youth provision were seen as key to improving cohesion. Many of these issues would be addressed in the Children and Young People's Play and Leisure Strategies and the Council's neighbourhood approach. Members heard about three key events in Rossendale in 2007. Members also agreed to meet with representatives of the LSP and to undertake a site visit to Bury to view some street scene solutions.

Enforcement - The Task and Finish Group met with the Interim Environmental Health Manager who presented the draft Enforcement Policy of the Council to the Group.

Having considered the Policy a number of amendments were agreed and the Cabinet were recommended to approve the Policy for consultation purposes. A further meeting would be arranged in 3 months to review progress and the results of the consultation.

5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

5.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

6.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from the report.

7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

7.1 There are no specific HR issues arising from the report.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 That the following Task and Finish Groups continue their work into the new municipal year 2007/08.

- Car Parking
- Enforcement
- Community Cohesion

9. RECOMMENDATION

9.1 That the progress report be noted.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 N/A

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